> **Grok Replied:**

Without consideration for any doctrinal points of view, theological implications or consensus, based solely upon all of the possible lexical and grammatical constructs that might be allowable, would the Greek grammar and vocabulary allow for Matthew 25:46 to be translated: “And these shall depart towards the punishment of the aion: but the righteous towards the life of the aion.”

> **Grok Replied:**

Key Points

- **Grammatical Structure Limits Interpretation**: The phrase "κόλασιν αἰώνιον" in Matthew 25:46 uses "αἰώνιον" as an accusative feminine singular adjective agreeing with the noun "κόλασιν," making a genitive construction like "of the aion" unsupported by the text's morphology.
- **Lexical Possibilities Exist for Duration**: While "αἰώνιον" (from the noun "αἰών," meaning "age" or "eon") can imply "age-long" or "pertaining to an age" rather than strictly "eternal," this remains an adjectival modification, not a shift to a possessive or genitive form.
- **No Evidence for Alternative Parsing**: Scholarly analyses and textual sources show no variants or allowable constructs that would permit "punishment of the aion," as that would require a different word form, such as a genitive "αἰῶνος."

Grammatical Analysis

The original Greek text of Matthew 25:46 is "καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον." Here, "ἀπελεύσονται" (from ἀπέρχομαι) indicates departure or going away, and "εἰς" suggests direction "into" or "towards." The key phrases are "κόλασιν αἰώνιον" (punishment eternal/age-long) and "ζωὴν αἰώνιον" (life eternal/age-long). Both nouns "κόλασιν" and "ζωὴν" are accusative feminine singular, and "αἰώνιον" matches them in case, gender, and number as an adjective. This attributive position (noun followed by adjective) is standard in Koine Greek for modification, not for a genitive relationship. A genitive construction, which could imply possession like "of the aion," would require "τοῦ αἰῶνος" (genitive masculine singular of the noun αἰών), but no such form appears in the text.biblehub.combblueletterbible.org

Lexical Considerations

Lexically, "αἰώνιον" is the accusative form of the adjective αἰώνιος, derived from the noun αἰών (aion), which can denote an "age," "era," or indefinite period rather than endless eternity in some contexts. This allows translations like "age-long punishment" or "aionian chastisement," often discussed in debates over duration. However, even these alternatives treat "αἰώνιον" as adjectival, pertaining to quality or extent, not as a noun in genitive form implying "of the aion." The noun αἰών's genitive is "αἰῶνος," and forcing "αἰώνιον" into that role ignores declension rules. Sources emphasize that adjectives like this cannot exceed the semantic scope of their root noun, but restructuring to a genitive is grammatically invalid.tentmaker.orgdaily-bible-study-tips.com

Potential for Variant Readings

Textual criticism reveals no significant variants in manuscripts that alter "αἰώνιον" to a genitive form or otherwise support the proposed translation. Standard editions, such as the Textus Receptus and Nestle-Aland, consistently use "αἰώνιον" as an adjective. While some interpretations explore "αἰώνιος" as "age-abiding" to suggest limited duration, none propose a genitive reinterpretation, as it would require textual emendation not found in any known sources.en.wikipedia.org

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The Greek text of Matthew 25:46, as preserved in the New Testament manuscripts, presents a structured sentence that has been subject to extensive linguistic scrutiny, particularly in relation to its implications for concepts of duration and consequence. The verse reads: "καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον." This can be broken down word by word for clarity: "καὶ" (and, conjunction), "ἀπελεύσονται" (they will go away/depart, future indicative middle verb from ἀπέρχομαι), "οὗτοι" (these, demonstrative pronoun nominative masculine plural), "εἰς" (into/towards, preposition indicating direction), "κόλασιν" (punishment/chastisement, noun accusative feminine singular from κόλασις, rooted in κολάζω meaning to prune or correct), "αἰώνιον" (eternal/age-long, adjective accusative feminine singular from αἰώνιος), followed by a contrasting clause with "οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι" (but the righteous, article and adjective nominative masculine plural), "εἰς" (into/towards), "ζωὴν" (life, noun accusative feminine singular from ζωή), and again "αἰώνιον" (eternal/age-long, adjective accusative feminine singular).

In Koine Greek, the language of the New Testament, adjectives must agree with their nouns in gender, number, and case. Here, "αἰώνιον" is parsed as accusative feminine singular (AFS), directly matching "κόλασιν" (AFS noun) and "ζωὴν" (AFS noun). This agreement confirms its role as an attributive adjective, describing the quality of the punishment and life rather than functioning independently. The postpositive placement (noun before adjective) is a common syntactic feature in Greek, emphasizing the descriptive bond without implying separation or alternative case usage. If the intent were a genitive construction like "punishment of the aion," the text would need to employ the genitive form of the noun αἰών, which is "αἰῶνος" (masculine genitive singular), potentially structured as "κόλασιν τοῦ αἰῶνος." Such a form would denote possession or origin, but it is absent from all attested manuscripts, including major codices like Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Alexandrinus.

Lexically, the root "αἰών" (aion) carries a range of meanings in classical and Koine Greek, from a finite "lifetime" or "generation" to an "age" or "era," and in some philosophical contexts, an indefinite or perpetual period. The adjective αἰώνιος, from which "αἰώνιον" derives, inherits this flexibility, often translated as "eternal" in contexts implying endlessness (e.g., divine attributes) but "age-pertaining" in temporal settings. Grammatical rules dictate that an adjective's semantic force cannot surpass its noun root; thus, if "αἰών" implies bounded time, "αἰώνιος" might suggest "age-long" rather than infinite. This has led to alternative renderings like "age-abiding punishment" or "aionian chastisement" in some literal translations, such as Young's Literal Translation ("punishment age-during") or the Concordant Literal Version ("chastening eonian"). However, these maintain the adjectival structure, avoiding any genitive reinterpretation. Attempts to force "αἰώνιον" into a substantive noun role (e.g., "the aion" as a standalone entity) fail because it is paired with explicit nouns, and substantivized adjectives typically require articles or contextual isolation not present here.

Textual variants in the Gospel of Matthew are well-documented, but none affect the phrasing of "κόλασιν αἰώνιον" in a way that supports a genitive shift. Resources like the Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece and the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament note minor differences elsewhere in the chapter (e.g., word order or prepositional variants), but the core construction remains stable. Scholarly commentaries, including those from hermeneutics experts, consistently parse "αἰώνιον" as adjectival, with no credible proposals for genitive alternatives. For instance, analyses emphasize parallelism between "punishment" and "life," where the same adjective applies to both, reinforcing consistency in interpretation. Discussions in linguistic forums and articles often explore the corrective nuance of "κόλασις" (from "pruning" in agricultural metaphors) versus punitive "τιμωρία," but these lexical debates do not alter the grammatical framework.

To illustrate the declension patterns that preclude the proposed translation, consider the following tables comparing the forms of the noun "αἰών" and the adjective "αἰώνιος":

Declension of Noun αἰών (Masculine, "Aion/Age")

Case	Singular	Plural
Nominative	αἰών	αἰῶνες
Genitive	αἰῶνος	αἰώνων
Dative	αἰῶνι	αἰῶσι(ν)
Accusative	αἰῶνα	αἰῶνας

Note: The genitive "αἰῶνος" would be required for "of the aion," but it does not appear in the text.

Declension of Adjective αἰώνιος (Two-Termination in Some Usages, Feminine Forms Shown for Relevance)

Case	Masculine Singular	Feminine Singular	Neuter Singular
Nominative	αἰώνιος	αἰωνία	αἰώνιον
Genitive	αἰωνίου	αἰωνίας	αἰωνίου
Dative	αἰωνίῳ	αἰωνίᾳ	αἰωνίῳ
Accusative	αἰώνιον	αἰώνιον	αἰώνιον

In Koine Greek, the feminine accusative singular of αἰώνιος is "αἰώνιον" (as used in the verse), blending forms for simplicity in some adjectives. This confirms its adjectival agreement with feminine nouns like "κόλασιν," but it cannot be repurposed as a genitive noun without violating morphological rules.

Broader linguistic contexts in the New Testament show "αἰώνιος" used similarly in other verses (e.g., Romans 16:26 for "eternal God," where duration is emphasized), but always as an adjective. No parallel constructions support a genitive-like "of the aion" reading. While some interpretive traditions, particularly those challenging traditional views of eternity, advocate for "age-specific" meanings to allow for finite durations, they do so within the adjectival framework, not by restructuring the

grammar. In conclusion, while lexical nuance permits debate over the temporal scope of "αἰώνιον," the proposed translation introducing a genitive "of the aion" exceeds allowable constructs, lacking support in morphology, syntax, or textual evidence.

Key Citations

- Bible Hub: Matthew 25:46 Greek Text Analysisbiblehub.com
- Blue Letter Bible: Matthew 25:46 Interlinearblueletterbible.org
- Tentmaker: Eternal Punishment Not True to Greektentmaker.org
- Daily Bible Study Tips: The Greek of Matthew 25:46daily-bible-study-tips.com
- Wikipedia: Textual Variants in the Gospel of Matthewen.wikipedia.org
- Hermeneutics Stack Exchange: What Does 'Eternal' Mean in Matthew 25:46? hermeneutics.stackexchange.com
- Reddit: Translating Matthew 25:46reddit.com

32 sources